

Broadcast by  
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Well, the American people seem to be talking about just one thing and asking many questions about it, and that is, the removal of General MacArthur. The first question, as you might well surmise, is this: "Hasn't the President of the United States the right to fire any General?"

Of course he has that right. But the real question is, "Was President Truman right in firing General MacArthur?"

I think the President need not have dismissed MacArthur but could easily have resolved the differences in a manner that would not have split America and would not have humiliated a national hero. When an important executive is 8,000 miles away from home base on an important assignment, and the wires get crossed up with messages from his employer, you don't fire him on the spot -- you bring him home and have a face-to-face talk with him and a showdown, and then if you can't clear up the misunderstanding, you ask him to resign or fire him. Tokyo, after all, is less than 48 hours away from Washington in flying time.

The next question: "What was the misunderstanding? What are the facts? Didn't MacArthur just simply disobey orders?"

As I examine the facts, MacArthur complied with his orders as he understood them and his military Secretary, Major General Courtney Whitney says the same thing. This is an odd time to accuse a man who has been Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army either of not knowing how to obey orders or of wilfully disobeying orders. The orders given MacArthur, as I read them, were

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never explicit, and the so-called policies, if there were any, were never explained clearly to General MacArthur. The whole key to the controversy can be found by taking as an example one of the important messages released by the White House last week. This was sent to MacArthur on March 20th by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Because that message is bound to be the basis for the judgment of this case in history, I'm going to read it to you and then explain it. It is brief. I quote:

"To the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Tokyo, Japan, from (the) Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. State (Department) planning presidential announcement shortly that with the clearing of (the) bulk of South Korea of aggressors, the United Nations are now prepared to discuss conditions of settlement in Korea. Strong U. N. feeling persists that further diplomatic effort toward a settlement should be made before any advance with major forces north of (the) 38th Parallel. Time will be required to determine diplomatic reactions and permit new negotiations that may develop. Recognizing, (and I'm still quoting) that (the 38th) Parallel has no military significance, (the) State (Department) has asked (the) Joint Chiefs of Staff what authority you should have to permit sufficient freedom of action for (the) next few weeks to provide security for (the) U. N. forces and maintain contact with (the) enemy. Your recommendations (are) desired." (That's the end of the quotation.)

Now note carefully the language. There isn't a word in that message which says that the United Nations has decided on a policy, nor that the United States has decided on a policy. It says simply that "a strong feeling persists." It sounds like the speculative dispatches of any Washington newspaper correspondent as he writes about the fluctuating sentiment in Washington.

Now what is a military commander 8,000 miles away to do when he gets a vague message like that which doesn't give him any decision on policy,

but merely the expression of some bureaucrat's plan in the Department of State? And who operates our Army nowadays, anyway? Surely not the Department of State! Yet, that Department asks a General in the field to deploy his troops, not for a day or two, but for a few weeks -- a few weeks, mind you -- in such a way as to prevent any advance of his major forces. At the same time he is asked to provide for the security of U. N. Forces and he's told to maintain contact with the enemy. What kind of "double-talk" is that, really?

The next question -- "Isn't the Commander-in-Chief, namely, the President, supreme? Can't he impose whatever policy he pleases?"

No, he cannot, if Congress disagrees, because the President is accountable to his boss -- the people of the United States. Under our written Constitution, the people's representatives, namely, the Congress, can, so to speak, court-martial the Commander-in-Chief. They can impeach the President and remove him from office if they think the people want them to do it.

On what charge can a President be impeached -- you might ask. He can be impeached for failing to do his duty as he has sworn to do it under the Constitution. One charge being mentioned in Congress is that the President failed to get a declaration of formal authority from Congress to conduct an action with 250,000 American troops -- Army, Navy and Air Force -- 8,000 miles away from our mainland, all of which the President now in his speeches frankly calls a "war." Congress alone has the authority to declare war.

Another charge mentioned is that he has refused to grant our troops in Korea permission to strike at enemy bases even though they have been under enemy air attack and that he has thus needlessly sacrificed American lives.

It takes a majority vote, however, of the House of Representatives to present a formal charge of impeachment, and it takes two-thirds of the Senate to remove a President.

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Next question: "Is this MacArthur controversy a partisan matter?"

No, of course not. We have already had 60,000 casualties in nine months in Korea, which is more casualties than the United States suffered in its first full year of World War II. The sons of Republicans are being killed or wounded in Korea as well as the sons of Democrats.

Next question: "Isn't this an issue of civilian authority versus military authority?"

No, it is not. The Congress is also a civilian authority and it was the letter which General MacArthur wrote to Representative Martin of Massachusetts, minority leader, in answer to one from Mr. Martin, which really infuriated Mr. Truman and caused him to remove General MacArthur.

I was talking with Representative Martin on that point today and he authorized me to say: (and I quote):

"After what happened to MacArthur we in Congress cannot expect to get the truth. In the future no member of the Armed Services will dare to testify before any investigating committee of Congress or answer any letter from a member of Congress if his information or judgment is at variance with the Truman policies. There goes our much-vaunted civil authority -- for Congress is a coordinate branch of the government of the United States under our Constitution, and when we get one-man government we don't have representative government any longer." (That's the end of the quotation from Mr. Martin.)

Now the next question: "Is it correct to say that MacArthur wants to extend the war and Truman wants to prevent a war?"

No, it isn't correct. For each man is sincerely convinced that he has the answer as to the best method of preventing World War III. I leave it to you, however, as to what prevents a big war. Is it when you tell the enemy every other day that you're afraid to get into a big fight and keep on saying

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to your own troops, "You must not fight the enemy with all your might because it might antagonize them" -- or is it when you give your troops the right to fight the enemy with maximum force? We never yet have entered any war just to get a stalemate or a draw. We go in to win, and to secure respect for our rights.

"But was not MacArthur told not to issue foreign policy statements?"

Yes, but he is on the ground in a military area. Commanders have the right to discuss military and related questions. I examined all the directives and statements made public last week by the White House as having been sent to MacArthur and I did not find a single explicit instruction that covers what MacArthur wrote to Congressman Martin. If by any twisted construction of those messages it is said he did violate orders, then so did General Ridgeway on March 12 when he said if we stopped at the 38th Parallel we would achieve victory. This could be taken to be a political statement, too. Also, General Stratemeyer of the 5th Air Force pointedly told the press last Friday about the bases in Manchuria from which planes were coming every day now to destroy our planes and attack our troops. That is an expression of opinion similar to MacArthur's, especially as General Stratemeyer pointed out how difficult it will be for us now to protect our troops. Incidentally, those six B-29's with all their crews, those big super-fortresses, have been lost by enemy action and yet we are unable to attack the bases from which those enemy planes are coming.

"Did General MacArthur's statements hurt us with our allies in the United Nations?"

The answer is to ask: "How much actual agreement is there among our allies today?" The British recognize Communist China, yet they are at war with Communist China. They want us to turn Formosa over to Communist

China. We don't want to do so. They want Communist China to sit in at the treaty conferences to determine the fate of the Japanese people. The American government doesn't want Red China in that conference. The British are sending war supplies to the Communist Chinese. What kind of a United Nations policy is that when our best friend in the U. N. actually follows a policy opposite to that of the United States?

And General MacArthur is relieved of his command supposedly, as the President puts it, for failing to give "wholehearted support to U. N. policies." What U. N. policies?

America is disunited today. It will not be reunited by the wishful thinking of pollyannas who cry out that we just must not debate among ourselves. The real answer is to discuss all this freely in the court of public opinion and have it out.

If General MacArthur is wrong, let us have the facts to prove it. If Mr. Truman has committed a blunder that may aggravate world conditions and invite a third World War -- just as Chamberlain by his appeasement policies invited World War II -- then let Congress consider the facts about that also.

For both General MacArthur and President Truman are now on trial in the court of public opinion, and the only answer that can come in this controversy must come from the people themselves, by the fullest expression of opinions communicated freely in our democracy to their representatives in Congress and to the President.

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